

Managing Access To Missouri Highways

How MoDOT's Access Management Guidelines Help Missouri

As roadways develop and traffic increases, many highways become congested, and drivers face increasing delays and crashes. Too many improperly located streets and driveways, combined with high vehicle traffic, can also lead to crashes and injuries. Keeping motorists moving safely and efficiently along Missouri highways is MoDOT's top priority. One tool MoDOT uses to get that job done is access management, and new guidelines will help promote statewide consistency and better access management.

What is Access Management?

Access management is the proper planning and design of access to the public roadway system that helps ensure traffic flow more smoothly, with fewer crashes, which means everyone travels safer. Access management guidelines include proper spacing of interchanges, public road intersections, traffic signals and driveways.

Roads with poor access management experience more traffic crashes (up to 68 percent of all crashes are access related), negative impacts for adjacent property owners, and loss of public and private investment in the roadway system. In fact, according to national studies, more than two-thirds of roadway crashes result from access-related problems. This can affect everyone, because roadways not only provide a way for travelers to get from Point A to Point B, but they also provide access to neighboring property. Access management helps balance the roadways' role of navigating traffic safely and smoothly with adequate property access.

Access Management Benefits

Using access management to solve traffic-related problems offers these important benefits:

- **Improved Safety** – Properly located driveways and streets reduce the number of potential conflicts that can lead to congestion, traffic and accidents. Studies show crash rates can drop as much as 50% on access-managed routes.
- **Improved Traffic Operations** – Limiting the number of driveways reduces the number of conflict points between through traffic and entering traffic, leading to smoother, more efficient traffic flow. More vehicles also can use a roadway when travel time and congestion are decreased. Research shows a four-lane roadway with well-managed access can carry nearly 10,000 more vehicles a day.
- **Improved Air Quality** – Reduced congestion and improved fuel economy lead to fewer air pollutants and less environmental harm.
- **Improved Roadway Aesthetics** – Techniques allow for additional landscaping which can create an improved climate for commercial and residential areas.
- **Increased Roadway Life Span** – Less reconstruction costs in the future means taxpayers get the most for their money, with less inconvenience in the long run.

Impacts of Access Management Guidelines

Although there are many benefits of access management, there are also many other impacts that should be considered:

- **Business/Property Impacts** – The possible reduction of access points may be negatively perceived by some businesses; certain businesses that rely on convenience traffic may experience a negative impact, but studies done in other states indicate that the majority of businesses experience increases sales and property values.
- **Right of Way Costs** – An increased investment will be necessary for additional right of way to manage access, however, the increased investment will be offset by additional capacity and a longer roadways lifespan.
- **Less-Direct Access for Motorists** – The reduction of conflict points will also reduce the number of left-turn opportunities, resulting in less-direct access to some properties.

How MoDOT Manages Access

MoDOT plans to put access management guidelines to work in several ways:

- **Purchasing access rights** along with the needed right of way for future projects.
- **Retrofitting existing roadways** – to address problems with safety and traffic operations on highly developed and congested routes, improvement alternatives should include access-management techniques.
- **Relocating highways** – Using access management in new projects means the road will continue to operate efficiently and safely for many years and will protect taxpayer investment in the roadway.
- **Cooperating with local governments** to review development plans and establish local land use/access-management plans for highways, which creates new types of access to state roadways using the local road network.
- **MoDOT reviews and issues permits** for subdivisions that border state roadways to ensure new driveways comply with spacing, visibility and other criteria.